

1360 4152 a

# WATCH UNTO PRAYER:

OR

## CONSIDERATIONS

FOR ALL WHO PROFESS

THEY BELIEVE IN THE LIGHT,

*To see whether they walk in the Light, without  
which they cannot become the Children of it,  
nor be cleansed from their Sins.*



By JOHN BELLERS. K

1 John i. 7. But if we walk in the Light, as he is in the Light, we have fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from *all Sin*.

Gal. xvi. 15. For in Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision, but a new creature.—16th. And as many as walk according to this rule, Peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

## *Watch unto Prayer, &c.*

**W**ATCHING is as needful to the soul as breathing is to the body: every quickening of the soul to God, gives it a disposition to watchfulness, as much as the body, recovering out of a swoon, is disposed to breathe.

As breathing whilst living, is inseparable from the body; so watching is inseparable from the soul, whilst it lives towards God.

Watching is to be spiritually minded, which is life and peace; but whenever the mind ceaseth to watch, it becomes sensual, or earthly, which tends to death.

Watchfulness is the great preparation of the soul, in order to *bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*, 2 Cor. x. 5. and he that thinks no evil will be sure to act none.

Such watchfulness being the true walking in the light, by which all the wiles of the enemy are discovered, and consequently the soul is inspired with immediate Prayer to God for deliverance; though possibly, but with sighs and groans that cannot be uttered: and as the enemy may be sudden with his temptations, the Lord is ready to deliver; which makes the soul that is watchful and sensible of them, as ready to praise God for his favours, as he was to pray for them.

This

This is to have conversation in Heaven: a sincere man (upon his watch) though his body stands upon the earth, yet his soul reaches unto heaven; where are the spirits of just men and angels, and where God is the judge of all.

As watching is a duty, whilst the soul is labouring against its evil inclinations, that it may avoid the punishment that followeth them; so as a man comes to attain more of the sense of the love of God upon his soul, watchfulness will be his delight; for as he comes to be weaned from the world, and enamoured with the love of God, he is ready to say, Lord let me always dwell here; which is a greater happiness and satisfaction, than to dwell in the palaces of princes without it.

One thing I would observe, for any that may be concerned, that though the reproof of instruction is the way to life; yet, if a man professeth belief in the light, and will not, by watching, take any notice of it, until it reproves him, he will greatly hazard his salvation; none being reprov'd by it, until after they have disobey'd it; and he that being often reprov'd, and stiffens his neck, is nigh unto sudden destruction: but he that will keep steady his inward watch unto Prayer, as he will avoid the occasion of reproof, so will he possess his soul in peace, with a serene mind, and an understanding heart.

Any visible action may have some sinister end as for reputation or profit, &c. but the regulation and well-governing of the mind, must be for God's sake; He only knowing the thoughts:

Therefore he that governs his mind right, is the only sincere man ; whereas he that keeps not a watch upon the thoughts of his heart, is much out of his way ; for though he should imitate the best of forms, he is but of the outward court ; it being impossible to worship God in the *beauty of holiness*, with an irregular mind.

For if it be not first prepared by a due watchfulness out of meetings, and by it reduced to the temper of good ground, but that the mind by unwatchfulness is left as the stony, thorny, or highway ground, that man will be much indisposed for the worship of God, when he comes into a meeting.

He that lets his mind be ungoverned out of meeting, cannot set it so right as it should be, when he comes into one : and such as get not forward in their spiritual journey, when in meetings, it's certain they will go backward, when out of them.

*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon,* Isai. lv. 7.—As much as if he had said, until they forsake their unrighteous thoughts, I will not accept their worship, nor hear their prayers : good actions recommend one man to another ; but it is a good mind which recommends men to God.

Only hearing the best preachers, is not worshipping of God ; they stir up the pure mind, by way of remembrance, whilst they declare that the spiritual worshipping of God, in the mind  
and

and soul, is the true worship which he accepts; and unless the soul performs this worship, the most lively testimonies to him, are but as the music of a well-tuned instrument, or as the harmony of a lovely song.

A bare turning the thoughts of the mind inward, when one comes into a meeting (unless it be prepared by watchfulness) is not the true spiritual worship: for as out of the heart come the issues of life; so do the issues of death also; such as lust, adultery, anger, murder, &c. which, if not subdued in watchfulness, make the heart but a den of darkness; and, *If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!*

But he that watches in the light (to bring his thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ) it will lead him to the *New Jerusalem* (from whence it shines) where the Lord God and the Lamb are not only the light thereof, but also the temple to worship in: but nothing that defileth can enter there; and yet the gate stands always open to such as walk in the light, but to none that walk in darkness (or evil thoughts) because there is no night there.



SEVERAL SCRIPTURES WHICH SHEW THE  
NECESSITY OF WATCHING.

Matt. xxiv. 42. Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

Matt. xxvi. 41. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation :

Mark xiii. 37. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, watch.

Luke xii. 37. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching.

Luke xxi. 36. Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the son of man.

Ephes. vi. 18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints ;

Coloff. iv. 2. Continue in Prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving ;

1 Peter v. 8. Be sober, be vigilant : because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.

Rev. iii. 2, 3. part of each. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, &c. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

A BRIEF

A  
BRIEF ACCOUNT  
OF  
SILENT MEETINGS, &c.

TAKEN FROM THE WORKS OF I. PENNINGTON.

---

THIS is a great mystery, hid from the eye of man, who is run from the inward life into outward observations. He cannot see either that this is required by the Lord of his people, or any edification therein, or benefit thereby. But, to the mind that is drawn inward, the thing is plain; and the building up hereby in the life of God, and fellowship one with another therein, is sweetly felt, and precious refreshment from the presence of the Lord received by them, who singly herein wait upon him, according to the leadings and requirings of his holy Spirit.

Now to open the thing a little to the upright-hearted, if the Lord please:

After the mind is in some measure turned to the Lord, his quickenings felt, his seed beginning to arise and spring up in the heart, then the flesh is to be silent before him, and the soul to wait upon him (and for his further appearances) in that measure of life which is already revealed.

Now

Now this is a great thing, to know flesh silenced, to feel the reasoning thoughts and discourses of the fleshly mind stilled, and the wisdom, light, and guidance of God's Spirit waited for.—For man is to come into the poverty of self, into the abasedness, into the nothingness, into the silence of his spirit before the Lord ;—into the putting-off all his knowledge, wisdom, understanding, abilities, all that he is, hath done, or can do, out of this measure of life ; into which he is to travel, that he may be cloathed and filled with the nature, power, and Spirit of the Lord.

Now in this measure of life, which is of Christ, (and in which Christ is, and appears to the soul) there is the power of life and death ; power to kill to the flesh, and power to quicken to God : power to cause the soul to cease from its own workings, and power to work in and for the soul what God requires, and what is acceptable in his sight.

And in this God is to be waited upon and worshipped continually, (both in private and in publick,) according as his spirit draws and teaches. For the Lord requires of his people not only to worship him apart, but to meet together to worship him, in the seasons, and according to the drawings of his Spirit : and they that are taught of him, dare not “ forsake “ the assembling of themselves together, as the “ manner of some is,” but watch against the temptations and snares which the enemy lays to deceive them therefrom, and to disturb their sense by, that they might not feel the drawings of the Father thereunto.

And



And this is the manner of their worship.

They are to wait upon the Lord, to meet in the silence of flesh, and to watch for the stirrings of his life and the breakings-forth of his power amongst them: and in the breakings-forth of that power they may pray, speak, exhort, rebuke, sing, or mourn, &c. according as the Spirit teaches, requires, and gives utterance. But if the Spirit do not require to speak, and give to utter, then every one is to sit still in his place (in his heavenly place, I mean) feeling his own measure, feeding thereupon, receiving therefrom into his spirit what the Lord giveth.

Now in this is edifying, pure edifying, precious edifying. His soul, who thus waits, is hereby particularly edified by the Spirit of the Lord, at every meeting: and then, also, there is the life of the whole felt in every vessel that is turned to its measure; inasmuch as the warmth of life in each vessel doth not only warm the particular, but they are like an heap of fresh and living coals warming one another; insomuch as a great strength, freshness, and vigour of life flows into all.—And if any be burthened, tempted, buffeted by Satan, bowed down, overborne, languishing, afflicted, distressed, &c. the estate of such is felt in spirit, and secret cries, or open, (as the Lord pleaseth,) ascend up to the Lord for them; and they many times find ease and relief in a few words spoken, or without words, if it be the season of their help and relief with the Lord.

For absolutely silent meetings, wherein there is a resolution not to speak, we know not.

But

But we wait on the Lord either to feel him in words, or in silence of Spirit without words, as he pleaseth. And that which we aim at, and are instructed to, by the Spirit of the Lord, as to silent meetings, is, that the flesh, in every one, be kept silent; and that there be no building-up, but in the Spirit and Power of the Lord.

✚ Now there are several states of people; some feel little of the Lord's presence; but feel temptations, and thoughts, with many wanderings and roving of mind: these are not yet acquainted with the power, or, at least, know not its dominion; but rather feel dominion of the evil over the good in them. This is a sore travailing and mournful state; and meetings to such as these, many times, may seem to themselves rather for the worse than the better. Yet even these, turning as much as may be from such things, and cleaving (or, at least, in truth of heart desiring to cleave) to that which disliketh or witnesseth against them, have acceptance with the Lord herein; and, continuing to wait in this trouble and distress (keeping close to meetings, in fear and subjection to the Lord, who requireth it, though with little appearing benefit) do reap an hidden benefit at present, and shall reap a more clear and manifest benefit afterwards, as the Lord wasteth and weareth out that in them wherein the darkness hath its strength.

Now,

Now, to evidence that, the Lord doth require these silent meetings, or meetings after this manner silent, it may thus appear :

God is to be worshipped in Spirit; in his own power and life ; and this is at his own dispose. His church is a gathering in the spirit. If any man speak there, he must speak as the " Oracle of God ;" as the vessel out of which God speaks ; as the trumpet out of which he gives the sound ; therefore there is to be a waiting in silence, till the Spirit of the Lord move to speak, and also give words to speak. For a man is not to speak his own words, or in his own wisdom and time ; but the Spirit's words, in the Spirit's wisdom and time ; which is, when he moves and gives to speak.

And seeing the Spirit inwardly nourisheth when he giveth not to speak words, the inward sense and nourishment is to be waited for, and received as it is given, when there are no words. Yea, the ministry of the spirit and life is more close and immediate when without words than when with words ; as has been often felt, and is faithfully testified, by many witnesses.

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard neither hath entered into the heart of man how and what things God reveals to his children by his Spirit, when they wait upon him in his pure fear, and worship and converse with him in Spirit ; for then the fountain of the great deep is unsealed, and the everlasting springs surely give up the pure and living water.

24 MA 59

